

Presentation to the City of Austin Commission on Immigrant Affairs

**Barriers to the Provision of Social Services to Immigrants  
(Refugees, Asylees, Victims of Trafficking)**

By

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&

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I. How can City Commission help?

- Primary obstacles include language & access to reliable, proficient & inexpensive interpretation services.
  - \*Language barriers complicate systems further – clients have difficulties negotiating systems such as educational, medical, governmental, housing, employment.
- Lack of funding for interpretation services.
- Insufficient programs designed to work with or accommodate immigrant/refugee population. Translation of documents
- Need facility to house residential shelter for domestic minor victims.
- Recognition of Domestic Minors as victims of crime, not prostitutes – decriminalization, recognition of inappropriateness of criminal charges for minors. Site for mental health Services, educational & employment programs

2. How can City Council help us:

- Keep us informed on issues City council might encounter that have implications for Immigrants.
- Listen to us if we bring issues to the table – not lip-service. Dialogue & transparency
- Look at how to use budget efficiently including immigrants/refugees in the distribution.
- Fund a position providing mental health services

3. Aspects of Issues for city to consider moving forward:

- The impact that events the magnitude of FI Race, SXSW, ACL & others have on trafficking
- The implications of mental health issues among immigrants
- Increase availability of affordable housing/medical services
- Proximity to I-35 & southern border – trafficking routes for trafficking, illegals, drugs, arms which frequently involve immigrants.
- Impact of Federal laws on this area/city.